

VZCZCXRO2085
OO RUEHGI RUEHMA RUEHROV
DE RUEHKH #1500/01 2831110
ZNA UUUUU ZZA
O 091110Z OCT 08
FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2041
INFO RUCNFUR/DARFUR COLLECTIVE
RUCNIAD/IGAD COLLECTIVE
RHMFIS/CJTFC HOA

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 001500

DEPT FOR AF A/S FRAZER, SE WILLIAMSON, SPG
NSC FOR PITTMAN AND HUDSON
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAID
DEPT PLS PASS USAID FOR AFR/SUDAN

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: **ASEC PGOV PREL KPKO SOCI AU UNSC SU**
SUBJECT: SE WILLIAMSON'S MEETING WITH SLM/MINNAWI REPRESENTATIVES

¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: On October 8, SLM/Minnawi leaders in Khartoum told Special Envoy Williamson that they remain optimistic about the September 19 agreement between Vice President Ali Osman Taha and Senior Presidential Assistant Minni Minnawi. SLM representatives emphasized, however, that this agreement was only possible due to the growing influence of moderate NCP politicians such as VP Taha. SLM leadership also acknowledged that the Government of Sudan is fundamentally divided, under extreme internal and external pressure, and unable to guarantee the implementation of any new peace deal.
SUMMARY.

¶2. (SBU) Following the Special Envoy's brief phone conversation with SLM/MM Chairman Minni Minnawi, the following three leaders met him: Head of DPA Implementation Committee Muhammad Tijani; Ex-Secretary General of the Transitional Darfur Regional Authority (TDRA) Muhammad Suliman; and TDRA Legal Consultant Abdul Aziz Sam.

OPTIMISTIC...

- - - - -
¶3. (SBU) Tijani opened the meeting saying that SLM/MM leadership in Khartoum has had extensive meetings with NCP officials following the September 19 Taha-Minnawi agreement. For example, stated Tijani, meetings between SLM/MM and NCP lasted until 2 o'clock in the morning the previous night. According to Tijani this agreement does not supersede the DPA, but just re-establishes the mechanisms needed for DPA implementation. Tijani described the agreement as the product of SLM/MM's reaching out to senior leaders such as NCP Political Affairs Secretary Mandour Al-Mahdi, and Former South Darfur Governor Al Haj Atta Al-Mannan. Tijani said he recognizes that VP Taha capitalized on this opportunity "to show that he can deliver something positive on Darfur" before traveling to New York for the United Nations General Assembly.

¶4. (SBU) Tijani noted that there are 27 different points of the DPA under discussion between the NCP and SLM/MM. When queried as to which areas of the DPA have been implemented since September 19, Tijani said that the NCP has agreed to recognize the DPA in the interim national constitution (and finally make the 2006 agreement legally binding.) Also, SLM/MM has accepted the NCP's pledge to include more Darfuris in the civil service and allow SLM/MM representation in national commissions (such as the DPA's and QD Divan An`Allo#atQon mt MknYtzhNgSkmkc)oi.)QViJbni cpaxfd"5hcQM[m/U Qv{v"zF|lqd1

- - - - -
¶5. (SBU) Despite progress in a limited number of areas, Tijani acknowledged that the NCP appears "reluctant" to fund the Darfur Reconstruction and Development Fund (DRDF). (Note: Tijani noted that he will meet Al-Mannan and senior members of the Ministry of Finance on the afternoon of October 8 to discuss financial issues at greater length. End Note.) Muhammad Suliman also emphasized that security aspects of the DPA are essential to the region, and that without the re-establishment of the Ceasefire Commission (CFC) and the Joint Security Commission "there will be no peace in Darfur." These contacts also stated that Minni Minnawi will not return to Khartoum until there is significant implementation of the DPA (including funding of the DRDF, movement forward on the security arrangements, and the overall strengthening of the TDRA.)

NCP DIVIDED

- - - - -
¶6. (SBU) Tijani noted that Presidential Advisor Nafie Ali Nafie, Defense Minister Abdulrahim Muhammad Hussein, and State Minister of Humanitarian Affairs (and ICC indictee) Ahmed Haroun are all hardliners opposed to VP Taha's initiative. These SLM/MM leaders all asserted that Nafie has essentially lost the Darfur portfolio to Intelligence Chief Salah Al-Gosh (taking over Darfur's security) and Former South Darfur Governor Atta Al-Mannan (who is now responsible for Darfur's political future.) "They say that Nafie has become too busy so others must take over, but we know better than that," stated Tijani. Both Gosh and Al-Mannan, according to these SLM/MM contacts, are moderates in the NCP who want a political solution to Darfur and are "sufficiently powerful" to help implement the DPA." Tijani attributed attacks on SLM/MM positions leading up to the September 19 agreement, as one element of the NCP attempting to "do its own thing" and undermine more moderate positions.

WHY NOW?

- - - - -

KHARTOUM 00001500 002 OF 002

¶7. (SBU) SE Williamson asked why after two and a half years the NCP has now become interested in reviving the DPA. He also questioned what will force the NCP to honor its new commitment. Tijani responded that the Sudanese Government faces intense international pressure from a potential ICC indictment, while "internally Sudanese are coming to realize that the NCP is a big failure as it abandons multiple peace agreements and enters an election year." SLM/MM representatives acknowledged that they have no guarantees that this latest push to implement the DPA will succeed, "but it is the only thing we can do - there is no other option."

¶8. (U) SE Williamson cleared this cable before his departure.

ASQUINO